

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMCONSUL GOTEBORG

C O N F I D E N T I A L STOCKHOLM 5293

E.O. 11652: GDS

TABS: PINT, SW

SUBJECT: VICTORIOUS PARTIES MANEUVER IN ATTEMPT TO FORM
NEW SWEDISH GOVERNMENT

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. IN THE WEEK SINCE THE SWEDISH ELECTION, THE LIBERAL, CENTER AND MODERATE PARTY LEADERS HAVE BEEN HOLDING SECRET DISCUSSIONS ON THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S FORMATION AND PROGRAM. THEY HAVE REFUSED DETAILED COMMENT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TALKS, AND HAVE LIMITED THOSE INVOLVED TO A HANDFUL OF ADVISORS. CENTER PARTY LEADER THORBJORN FALLDIN, PRESUMABLY THE NEXT PRIME MINISTER, IS LEADING THE NEGOTIATIONS.

2. IN THE COURSE OF THE WEEK THE PARTICIPATION OF THE MODERATE PARTY, AND PARTICULARLY OF LEADER GOSTA BOHMAN, BECAME THE CENTER OF CONTROVERSY. TWO STOCKHOLM DAILIES, DAGENS NYHETER AND EXPRESSEN, HAVE TAKEN ISSUE WITH THE MODERATES, WITH EXPRESSEN CALLING FOR BOHMAN'S RESIGNATION. BOTH PAPERS HAVE CONNECTIONS WITH THE LIBERAL PARTY, AND HAVE MADE MUCH OF THE IDEA THAT THE MODERATES BE EXCLUDED

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FROM GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION. THEY WARN AGAINST

THE "RIGHTIST" INFLUENCE WHICH MIGHT BE EXERTED BY BOHMAN AND HIS PARTY, AND WARN THE LIBERALS AND CENTER AGAINST WEAKENING THEIR LEFT/MIDDLE POLICIES.

3. THE PAPERS HAVE ALSO FOCUSED ON BOHMAN'S RELATIVE EXCLUSION FROM TALKS WITH FALLDIN AND LIBERAL LEADER PER AHLMARK, WHO HAVE OFTEN BEEN TALKING ALONE TOGETHER. FURTHER PRESSURE HAS BEEN APPLIED BY THE YOUTH ASSOCIATIONS OF THE CENTER AND LIBERAL PARTIES, WHO HAVE PUBLICLY STATED THAT THEY PREFER A TWO-PARTY GOVERNMENT WITHOUT MODERATE PARTICIPATION.

4. IN REPLY TO SUCH ADVICE, FALLDIN SAID AT A PRESS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 23 THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE THREE PARTIES WERE PROCEEDING IN A GOOD ATMOSPHERE OF "MUTUAL RESPECT," AND THAT THEIR GOAL WAS TO BUILD A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT IN THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE. HE POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS NO REASON THUS FAR TO BREAK OFF THE ONGOING CONTACT AMONG THE THREE PARTIES, ADDING HOWEVER, THAT FIRST THE CENTER AND LIBERAL PARTIES WOULD SEEK TO REACH AGREEMENT ON BASIC ISSUES, AND THEN THEY WOULD TALK WITH THE MODERATES. WHILE REFUSING TO DISCUSS SPECIFICS OR MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENTS, FALLDIN EMPHASIZED THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL NOT HAVE A RIGHTIST ORIENTATION.

5. THE LIBERAL PARTY RIKSDAG GROUP MET OVER THE WEEKEND AND GAVE PARTY LEADER AHLMARK A CLEAR MANDATE TO WORK FOR A THREE-PARTY GOVERNMENT. AHLMARK REFUSED TO COMMENT ON POSSIBLE MODERATE POSITIONS WITHIN A COALITION GOVERNMENT, BUT SAID THAT THE LIBERAL PARTY RIKSDAG MEMBERS HOPE FOR A STRONG COALITION OF THE THREE PARTIES. END UNCLASSIFIED.

6. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. COMMENT: DAGENS NYHETER AND EXPRESSEN, THOUGH FORMALLY INDEPENDENT, HAVE LINKS WITH THE FACTION OF THE LIBERAL PARTY WHICH WOULD PREFER A LIBERAL/SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CONFIDENTIAL

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ORIENTATION, AND TO WHICH BOHMAN AND RIGHT-WING MODERATES ARE ANATHEMA. HOWEVER, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THE CENTER AND LIBERALS WOULD ATTEMPT TO EXCLUDE THE MODERATES FROM GOVERNMENT, AND MANEUVERING WITHIN THE PARTIES AS WELL AS BY THE PRESS IS PROBABLY AS MUCH TO PRESSURE AHLMARK AND FALLDIN TO REINFORCE THEIR CENTRIST ORIENTATION AS TO DENIGRATE BOHMAN. A HIGH-PLACED MODERATE PARTY

SOURCE TOLD US THAT IN HIS OPINION THE MODERATES
WOULD "DO ANYTHING, AGREE TO ANYTHING," TO GIVE
THE NON-SOCIALISTS A VIABLE THREE-PARTY
GOVERNMENT, AND CONCEDED THE MODERATES HAD LITTLE
ROOM FOR NEGOTIATION. WHILE DOUBTING THAT THE
CENTER PARTY AND THE LIBERALS WOULD EXCLUDE THE
MODERATES AND THUS CREATE A PERILOUS SITUATION OF
OPPOSITION FROM THE RIGHT AS WELL AS FROM THE LEFT,
HE ADDED THAT IN SUCH A CASE MODERATES WOULD ALMOST
CERTAINLY GIVE TACIT SUPPORT TO THE TWO PARTIES
TO KEEP NON-SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT FROM FALLING.
SMITH

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